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### **New campaign urges food industry to stop marketing to kids**

Food companies must live up to their promises<sup>1</sup> by ending the practice of marketing unhealthy food -to children. Otherwise regulation will be the only way forward to curb this pernicious practice that is fattening children's waists. That is the main message of a new campaign called 'Food marketing to children: game over?' launched today by BEUC.

The campaign exposes actual examples of food ads that target children online. Over summer 2016, BEUC's member organisations across Europe have retrieved several ads that run afoul of the companies' voluntary commitments to market their high-sugar and high-fat products in a more responsible manner.

Monique Goyens, Director of BEUC, has commented:

"Our members have been sounding the alarm for years and our campaign exposes how ads praising sugar-laden cereals or chocolate bars still overwhelmingly target children. In effect, this is planting the seed of obesity in children's diets as early as possible.

"Food companies increasingly shift their marketing from TV to the internet. Advergaming, websites and apps deliberately heighten children's appetite for high calorie food. And the Internet abounds with such examples.

"Children cannot be considered regular consumers. Their early life eating patterns are decisive in shaping their future nutrition habits and health. It's essential that food makers start acting responsibly in light of an exploding obesity crisis."

#### **Background:**

According to the World Health Organization, 1 in 3 children in Europe is either overweight or obese. WHO research shows that this 'epidemic' is directly linked to the marketing of unhealthy food and drinks.

#### **Note**

<sup>1</sup> Major EU food giants acknowledged the issue through their 2012 EU Pledge. As laudable as this voluntary initiative can be, the Pledge is falling short of its promises because many companies fail to abide by their own rules. When rules are being applied, the criteria **that define which food can be marketed to children are too lenient**.

**Useful links:** [Campaign page](#) - [Gallery](#)

BEUC's 2015 position paper [Informed food choices for healthier consumers](#), from page 22.